

## Sanctuary

by Windbreak

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Summary: Leo/Takumi. "You're the only person who's ever looked at me like that," Takumi murmurs.

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Takumi wakes early, when the sun is just beginning to peek above the trees. A quick glance to his left tells him Leo is still asleep, and he moves carefully so as not to wake him. He's just about to get up when he hears a muffled protest and an arm wraps around his waist, pulling him down.

Leo has never been much of a morning person.

Takumi can't help but laugh. "Good morning to you, too."

Eyes still closed, Leo responds with an incoherent mumble before pulling him closer and snuggling in. While Takumi takes pride in getting up at the crack of dawn, Leo always takes at least half an hour to fully wake up, and he's impossibly cranky until he's had his daily cup of coffee. Personally, Takumi has never understood the allure of coffee. It's a decidedly Nohrian drink, too bitter for his taste.

The window is slightly cracked open, and the curtains flutter as the cool morning air enters the room. Strands of Takumi's hair ruffle in the gentle breeze, catching the light of the sun. Leo stirs and sits up as the room begins to lighten, and shamelessly reaches over to play with one of the silver strands. In response, the Hoshidan prince flushes and glances down a bit self-consciously, but a comfortable silence settles over them as Leo runs his fingers through his hair, combing out the tangles. Almost unconsciously, he closes his eyes at Leo's soothing touch and lets the breeze wash over his face. He feels like he could remain there with Leo forever, just the two of them, in a sanctuary of their own.

After a while, his eyelashes drift open and he sees the blond boy watching him with the beginnings of an amused smile tugging up at his lips. The expression in Leo's eyes captivates him: content, loving, adoring, as if he finds Takumi so fascinating he could gaze at him forever. Takumi averts his eyes shyly; he's not used to such intimate attention. He has spent most of his life ignored, people's gazes passing over him with little more than a cursory glance.

Feeling an inexplicably warm feeling spread through his body, Takumi wraps his arms around Leo and buries his head in his shoulder, inhaling his scent deeply. He smells of vanilla and wildflowers.

"You're the only person who's ever looked at me like that," he murmurs at last.

"What do you mean? You're beautiful." Leo's warm breath in his ear sends shivers down his spine. The other boy has begun to press gentle kisses down his neck, and Takumi can't help but draw in his breath sharply at each one, a blush blossoming across his cheeks.

But Leo's statement nags at him. Beautiful. The word is unlike anything he has ever been told in his life, nothing like the expectant gazes and disappointed whispers he gets from everyone else, living in the shadow of his older siblings and playing catch-up to their accomplishments. It is foreign and unfamiliar, yet wonderful and strangely liberating. At last, he turns and lightly takes the sides of Leo's face, forcing him to look up.

"Do you..." Takumi swallows hard. "Do you really mean that?"

Leo blinks. "Of course." He sounds a bit hurt, and Takumi takes his hand to tell him that he knows he's being sincere, entwining their fingers together.

"I know. I'm sorry," he assures him. "It's just that..." "I'm not..." To his dismay, his voice trembles and the words lodge in his throat. All at once, the insecurities return, even though he's been working so hard to hide them in the depths of his heart. He thought he'd rid himself of their presence, but they follow him relentlessly, like shadows. Under Leo's searching gaze, Takumi lowers his eyes in shame. Unspoken thoughts lie at the tip of his tongue, thoughts that plague him like ghosts during the day and keep him wide awake at night. Not good enough. Flawed. Full of imperfections.

He doesn't have to say anything more. After a moment, knowing what's on his mind, Leo chuckles softly and leans their foreheads together, lowering his hands to rest on Takumi's waist. "Takumi, to me, you'll always be enough," he murmurs.

Leo has always been different from the others. Leo understands him.

Takumi feels tears form at the corner of his eyes and curses himself, brushing them away before they fall. But he's laughing lightly as he leans forward to capture Leo's lips in a kiss.

"Thank you."

The barely whispered words almost float away with the breeze, but Leo

catches them and smiles, his eyes crinkling at the edges.

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file.